

# MOTION PICTURES

By Alphonsus P. Haire

**A**BOUT fifteen years ago an itinerant showman (Rock was his name) covered Connecticut with a magic lantern which he carried about with a horse and wagon. He made one-night stands at little towns, and in big places stopped for two nights or a week, according to the receptions he received.

The fever of ambition burned hot in his veins. He thought he saw in store for the stereopticon machine and moving picture incidentally, and for himself in particular, the most promising of futures.

"Blank," he said one day to the manager of the Blankville Opera House, "I want a partner. My business is growing too large for my capital. Let me have three hundred and fifty dollars and I'll give you a half-interest in my business."

But Blank only shook his head and smiled. The moving picture, he thought, was about played out. The public had grown tired of it. The only future worth thinking about was in the field of legitimate drama. So he turned a deaf ear to Rock's proposal.

Blank is still manager of the Blankville Opera House, and Rock—

A few months ago a white man and a negro met in a roped arena out West to settle with their fists the question of who was to be heavyweight champion of the world. They fought for \$101,000. In addition the colored man received in advance \$60,000 and the white man \$75,000 for their interests in moving pictures of the fight. Ten enormous moving picture cameras, together with a corps of expert picture men, were sent to the scene. At least three hundred thousand dollars in all was paid to get these pictures.

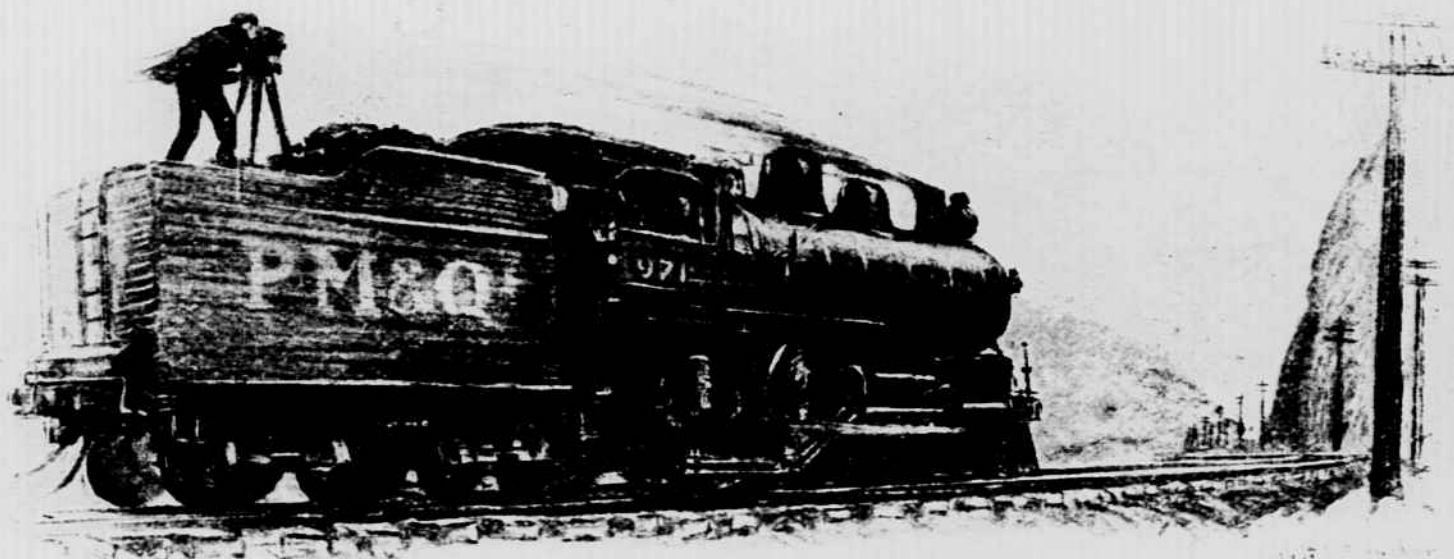
The man who advanced this money was W. T. Rock, onetime magic lantern operator of Connecticut, now president of one of the leading moving picture concerns in the country.

## Colonel Roosevelt's Home Coming

**I**T was his idea to get a picture of the story of Roosevelt's recent celebrated homecoming. How he did it makes an interesting story.

Two fast motor yachts were employed. Leaving New York Harbor early Saturday, June 18, equipped with motion cameras, operators, and assistants, they sighted the Kaiserin Auguste Victoria in the offing at about six o'clock. Immediately the faithful eyes of the cameras began to record all that happened. Pictures of the big liner coming up the lower bay were taken. Then the operators photographed the approach of the official boats, the Manhattan and Androscoggin, the reception the Kaiserin met with, the transfer of Mr. Roosevelt from the latter to the Manhattan, and the regular formal reception that next took place on the Androscoggin. The water events over, the moving picture yachts immediately steamed for the Bay Ridge landing in the lower bay, where automobiles received the films and rushed them off to the studio for development.

Five camera outfits took care of the operations on land. There were three at the Battery where Colonel Roosevelt was again formally received, this time by Mayor Gaynor, and where the big parade had its start. Up at Washington Arch, where the parade swung across from Broadway to Fifth-ave., and at 59th-st., where the



Getting Local Color from a Runaway Locomotive.

Roosevelt reviewing stand stood, the other stations were placed.

A waiting automobile at once took up the exposed film as each camera squad completed the work allotted to it. In all about five thousand feet of film was exposed and developed. This was all done in twenty-four hours after the parade took place, and the next day the pictures were delivered to different moving picture theaters in the city.

## Evolution of the New Theater

**T**HE moving picture itself is familiar to most of us; but the moving picture theater is an institution of more recent years. Five years ago it was hardly known. To-day there are, figuring conservatively, at least ten thousand auditoriums given over to it.

Legitimate theaters everywhere have rung down their curtains on legitimate drama, paid off their stars, and installed the vitagraph, cameragraph, or biograph. In New York city Keith & Proctor's house, at one time the home of the best in American theatricals, has become a moving picture theater. The Fourteenth street Theater, where Mansfield made his debut in "A Parisian Romance," the Harlem Opera House, the Majestic, and the Yorkville are only a few of the old established institutions to turn to the novelty of the moving picture and the trade drawing inducement of ten-cent seats for relief from dividends long deferred, due to lack of interest shown by the theater going public in regular productions. Even the grand old Academy of Music, the scene of more theatrical triumphs perhaps than any other stage in America, has given up the ghost and will shortly be featured as another moving picture palace.

But these are only straws which show the way the wind has been blowing.

You have possibly at one time or another in years back walked up Third-ave. in New York—any popular street in any city will answer—and noticed on block after block these empty-store "shows" whose only claim to theatrical pretensions was based upon rows of chairs, joined by planks, a rude ticket office, and a sheet for a curtain, with sometimes an ornamental front in plaster relief. Out of these humble beginnings grew the present day moving picture industry. In those days, little capital being required to open these amusement parlors, a great many rushed into the business, giving impetus to the manufacturing end of the industry. To-day the situation is changed.

There are in the neighborhood of ten thousand moving picture theaters in this country. The population is

about ninety millions; so that there is one moving picture house for each nine thousand of population.

Some of these "silent" theaters are elaborate affairs. Buffalo, for instance, has one motion picture theater that cost eighty-five thousand dollars to erect, and another that cost thirty-five thousand for furnishings and decorations alone. In Los Angeles there is a house that represents an investment of fifty thousand dollars. To many of these places come men and women in evening dress. Theater parties are common.

There is a moving picture manager in Denver who seats his audience, not according to what they pay for their seats, but entirely on the basis of clothes. On the lower floor the best dressed people are seated to the right. Well dressed but "business suits" go to the left. Women without men are invariably placed on the right, and younger folk go in the center. This house has an eight-piece orchestra and a five thousand-dollar pipe organ. Every night the house is thoroughly cleansed by a vacuum cleaner and an air sterilizing machine.

## American Dramas Demanded

**T**HE progress of the moving picture theater and its equipment called for similar progress in the quality and subjects of films. All along it was the theater, stimulated by a public demand which became more and more exacting as its taste became more elevated, that dug the spurs into the manufacturers of pictures.

When the moving picture was first put before the public, mere representations of moving things were sufficient to satisfy the general demand. Then came trick pictures and illusions, such as "A Trip to the Moon" and "Cinderella," and when these lost their power to excite the interest and wonderment of the public, the tabloid drama was created, and this now forms the greater part of the films.

What is most in demand to-day is a typical American play, presenting situations and ideas essentially American. The plot must be definite and the idea must be developed in concise narrative form. A moving picture scenario should not contain more than six hundred words. The most difficult phase of the work is the fact that the story must be introduced, developed, and brought logically to a dramatic climax and finale within fifteen minutes, or at the outside twenty minutes. The play must not run over one thousand feet in length of film. Often they do; but they must then be cut down. Business stories, touched up with a bit of romance, are specially popular.

One company, for instance, has an interesting story based upon the financial panic of 1907. George Hendrickson, reporter for one of the New York papers, had been discharged for intoxication. On reaching home, he yielded to the prayers and entreaties of his wife and little girl and promised them that he would never drink again. Seated in a restaurant the next evening, after having made a round of all the newspaper offices in a vain effort to secure another position, he inadvertently overheard enough of the conversation of two men at an adjoining table to arouse his reporter's sense of suspicion. He followed the men out of the restaurant, up to the doors of one of the largest trust companies in the city. By producing a paper one of the bankers had dropped, he gained admission to a meeting of the board of directors which was then being held late at night to avoid arousing the suspicions of the Street. Then, while the directors were wrangling over some measure or other, the reporter cautiously lifted the telephone receiver, slipped a match under the supporting arm, thus keeping the line open, and left the room.

On gaining the hall, Hendrickson secured permission to use the telephone, and there, through the open line to the directors' room, learned that the meeting was breaking up in a disagreement.

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The Stage Director Does All the Talking in These Novel Dramas.